

Havurah Shir Hadash
חבורת שיר חדש
P.O. Box 1262
Ashland, OR 97520



To: Judge Thomas Coffin
Re: Pete Seda
Date: August 14, 2007
From: Rabbi David Zaslow
Havurah Shir Hadash Synagogue
www.havurahshirhadash.org
(541) 621-0782

Dear Judge Coffin:

I have been the rabbi and spiritual leader of one of the three synagogues in Ashland, Oregon since 1995, and have known Pete Seda since the early days of my rabbinic studies in the late 1980's. I realize the task before you today is to assess if Mr. Seda is a flight risk, and if he might pose any danger to the community if he is free on bail.

I can tell you unconditionally that Mr. Seda would not have returned to face our judicial system if he were a flight risk, and I unconditionally believe that he will pose no danger whatsoever if you permit him to be free on bail while he prepares for his trial.

From the time I was ordained until several years after September 11, 2001 Pete Seda was my peace partner in bringing a bit of hope to both the Jewish and Muslim communities of southern Oregon. He spoke passionately against violence, Islamic terrorism, and for reconciliation with the Jewish community. He took some personal risk not only to associate himself with the Jewish community here, but to proclaim a very positive, public view about Israel.

I do not write these words lightly. In regard to the charges I have no personal knowledge of Pete's guilt or innocence. I am a strong supporter of our nation's War on Terrorism, and our alliance with Israel. At the same time, it was Muslim-American leaders like Pete Seda who were able to bring a measure of comfort and hope to communities across American after September 11. I have absolutely no doubt that Pete Seda will be a model citizen as he awaits trial should you grant his bail request.

Please do not hesitate to call me on my cell phone at the number above if you have any questions whatsoever.

Sincerely,
Rabbi David Zaslow